

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2020

TO: Donna Chun

FROM: Councilmember Brandon Elefante



SUBJECT: 2020 National League of Cities Congressional Conference

Attached you will find my travel report for the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference from March 8 to March 11, 2020.

Thank you.

**2020 National League of Cities
Congressional City Conference
March 8-11, 2020
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.**

BACKGROUND

The National League of Cities (NLC) is a resource and advocate for representing more than 200 million people in communities across the country. The City and County of Honolulu is a member of the NLC. The NLC has been around for more than 90 years and continues to advocate for its members in Washington, DC for important policies that matter most to its members. The NLC is an inclusive, innovative, and visible organization that continues to lead with urgency.

The conference attracts elected officials from cities, towns, and villages across the country. Over the course of the conference, the attendees could participate in conference workshops, NLC University Seminars, general sessions, and a Capitol Hill Advocacy Day.

Congressional City Conference

March 8-11, 2020

Trip Report by: Brandon Elefante, Honolulu City Councilmember, District 8

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Sunday, March 8, 2020

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Chair Dan Fowler opened the meeting

- Get out of a recession and spend more on transportation and infrastructure

Ms. Brittney Kohler, NLC Staff Member

- FAST Act expires on 09/30/2020
- \$305 Billion from 2016 to 2020
 - 15% increase from MAP 21 (previous Transportation authorization) to FAST Act
 - What will the next bill be?
- Legislative Priorities
 - Restoring the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STGB)
 - Request to Congress is 62.5% in restoring it to at least this historical level

The title of the Bill on the House side is: "Moving Forward" on the Senate it's: "America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 (ATIA)"

Homework for Transportation and Infrastructure

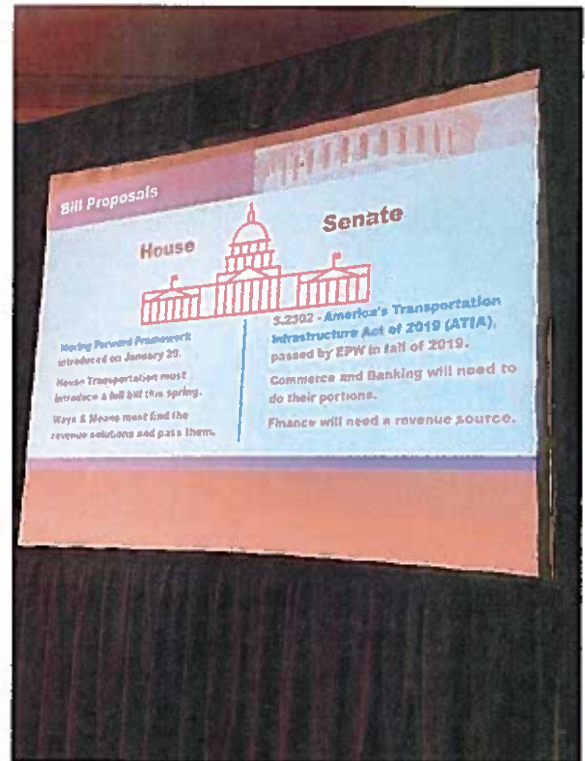
Members: Is any member of OahuMPO attending the AMPO conference?

- Key is to support the House Majority's Moving Forward framework

There's a climate title in the Transportation Bill

FAST Act: \$70B transfer to be able to pay for it

The Highway Trust Fund is currently in jeopardy



Former TIS Chair Laura Padgett from Wilmington

- Spoke about the realignment project in her community
- "Every good idea needs a future vision."
- Got support front the City Council. She is a former City Council member.
- Held multiple meetings —> feasibility study —> \$300,000 hired an engineering firm.
- Steps:
 - Task Force
 - Seek Funding
 - Hire Director — Director Aubrey Parsley (Building a new railroad)
- June 2019 grant award announced
 - \$2.75 Million Awarded
 - \$2 million Federal Railroad Administration
 - \$500,000 North Carolina Department of Transportation
 - \$260,000 Two years for the salary of the new director
- January 2020
 - 30% of engineering documentation

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The committee divided into small groups.

Co-Chairs: Fred Strong and Rod Craig

- Discussion on transit and rail in our communities
- Grade separation should be used from federal highway fund; currently not able to do so

The different subcommittees reported on their discussion.

Ms. Beth Osborne, Transportation for America

- Congestion increased by 144% compared to freeway capacity at 42%
- Overall congestion has increased
- 1993: 21 miles per day
- 2017: 25 miles per day
- People are driving more
- Roadway network design contributes to the problem
- Mixed use communities has everything all in one place

www.t4america.org

In 2019 there were 6,590 deaths and the most since 1988.

NLC Opening General Session

Monday, March 9, 2020

55th Annual Congressional City Conference

First Vice President Kathy Maness of NLC gave opening remarks

- Introduction of NLC Officers and Board of Directors

Mayor Barnett from Rochester Hills (80,000)

- Discussed on Coronavirus regarding healthcare workers
- Challenges about voting and how they were only given one day to find another place for voting
- 2 out of every 3 Americans don't have trust in our federal government
- Mayors and City Councilmembers have more trust from the public (operating from a position of strength)
- 75% have lost faith in our government
- "While we are strong alone, we are unstoppable together".

NLC President Joe Buscaino introduced himself

- Action overrides partisanship
- When you're responding to a 911 call, the operator will not ask you if you're a Democrat or Republican
- This week is about delivering results for our residents
- "Lead with a sense of urgency."
- Build coalitions because our impact is greater when we are not standing alone
- Nationally there are 10 million families who are still struggling to find a place to live
- Joint Committee on Homelessness (newly formed committee)
- Only 25% approve how Congress is doing their job
- Washington needs local leaders
- In November we developed 2020 leading cities agendas

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- 2020 agenda for NLC
 1. Rebuilding our infrastructure
 2. Creating a skilled workforce
 3. Housing stability and workforce
 4. Ending gun violence
 5. Respect
 6. Inclusion
 7. Accountability
 8. Partnership
- We are here for our cities
- Gave recognition to Councilmember Brent Jaramillo from Questa, New Mexico who represents 2,000 people
 - Serves on the NLC Board while going through chemotherapy
 - Now cancer free today!

Assistant Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency Peter Wright Brownfields area

- Can be key to restoring and revitalization to transforming sites
- \$64 million awarded for Brownfield grants and areas
- Many brownfields are located in opportunity zones
- 1997 document (measuring recycling update for local communities)
- In November 2020 — proposal to have national recycling goals
- EPA celebrating its 50th Anniversary

Mayor Muriel Bowser, Washington, D.C.

- Welcome address and thanked everyone for coming to the conference
- Homelessness, gun violence, and climate change are top of mind issues
- City wide solutions to city wide challenges
- We all have the responsibility to fix it
- Get out and enjoy our city

Feedback from local elected NLC officials

- Video from experienced local elected officials
- Best practices on policies

NLC CEO Clarence Anthony

- Welcome address and introduction of former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan

Former Speaker Paul Ryan

- Elected at the age of 28 years old
- Now at the American Idea Foundation after retiring from Congress
 - Mentor is Jack Kemp
 - Young economics person while being mentored by Mr. Kent
- Started a foundation —> condition of your birth doesn't determine the outcome of your life
- Pushed for laws while in Congress —> opportunities zones, etc.
- Local leaders are dealing with opportunity zones (how do you deal with implementation and gentrification?)
 - Used to be called enterprise zones

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- Put opportunity zones bill in the tax reform bill
- Opportunity zone is a tool for revitalization
- Bring capital from outside to revitalize poorer neighborhoods
- Job training and retail
- CEO Anthony asked about transportation and infrastructure issues
- Speaker Ryan —> will not get Republicans to raise gas taxes
 - More vehicles are more fuel efficient
 - Engines are more efficient
 - Smart move is to move to a vehicles miles traveled vs. gas tax
 - Normalize the idea of vehicles miles traveled
 - Smarter way for funding roads and bridges
 - Pilot project in Oregon
- Highway Trust fund is decreasing
 - Doesn't work anyway
 - Investing political capital into a smarter system like vehicles miles traveled
 - Focus on long term
- Substance Abuse (opioids, heroine, etc.)
 - Speaker Ryan —> What strategies are needed with funding to come in for local cities to address substance abuses?
 - Build models that can work to resolve these issues
- Works at Norte Dame as well

NLC Large Cities Meeting

12:15PM to 2PM

- I spoke with NLC President Joe Buscaino and his staff
- Small group tables and discussion about issues
 - I attended the cyber security and utility infrastructure discussions
 - Honolulu is going through a series of meetings to create storm water utility charges; one effort is to educate and have a public relations platform that informs all stakeholders
- Lastly, the last portion of the agenda was to discuss short term vacation rentals

Monday, March 9, 2020

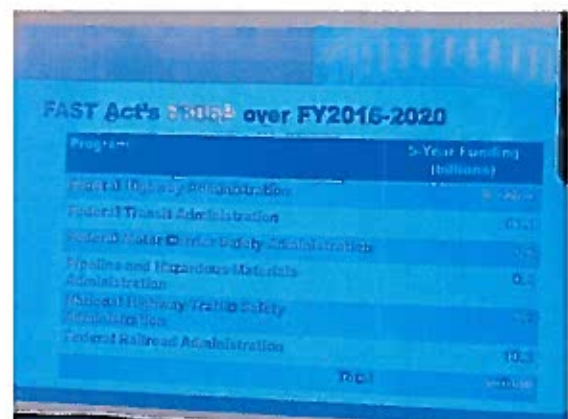
Asking Congress for Transportation Wins

Speakers: Mae Stevens, Executive Vice President of the Signal Group and Erich Zimmerman, National Association of Regional Councils, Deputy Director/Transportation Director

Opening remarks from Brittney Kohler, staff for NLC

FAST Act

- House bill in the next 45 days and be able to work with the Ways and Means Committee
- Transportation Reauthorization is the slowest marathon in Congress
- Senate Bill (S. 2302) started the process "America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 (ATIA)"
 - Work to do in the Senate



Program	5-Year Funding (billions)
Federal Highway Administration	54.4
Federal Transit Administration	17.1
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	1.4
Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Administration	0.3
Federal Highway Traffic Safety Administration	1.0
Federal Railroad Administration	10.3
Total	84.5

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Chair Dan Fowler

- Very active time for our committee in the next few months
- Staff at NLC is very good and gives us as elected officials confidence
- Started a liaison group
 - One or two of our TIS members to be state liaisons
- Advocacy and pushing for transportation wins is important
- Use examples on federal funding from Transportation funding
 - What have we done from it so far and what do we need to do with it going forward?
 - In Kansas City there is a need for \$40M for resurfacing streets. Only \$17M funded
- Introduced Archana Sridhar
 - Using digital tools to track members of Congress to assist guiding conversations relating to data — how much data we can input
 - Writing notes in a tool —> stronger reports in conversations and reports

Erich Zimmerman

- Transportation Reauthorization Act
 - \$12.1MB for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program
 - Most important source for local funding
 - \$850M for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
 - \$2.5B Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program
- MPOs are local elected officials in cities of 50,000 or more
 - Limited federal funding
 - Program efficiency
 - Long-range planning
 - Cross jurisdictional challenges
 - Suballocation
 - Gets allocated to the states
 - 55% of every \$1 is suballocated
 - 45% States can spend where and how they want
 - Historic rate: 62.5%
 - The higher the better for local priorities
 - Three asks:
 - Increase STBG
 - Increase portion of STBG that is suballocated
 - Infuse dollars directly into the local pot
 - Senate did not increase suballocation portion —> created new bicycle/pedestrian programs
- Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition
 - National Association of Regional Councils

Margo Pedroso, Deputy Director of Safe Routes Partnership

- What is TAP —> major source of biking, walking, and safe routes to school
 - Combination of programs since MAP-21
 - State DOTs and MPOs are not able to decide
 - Funding increased by 4% since FY2015
 - \$850M per year is not adequate (only 1/2 of projects submitted are funded)

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- Cut back on transfers ~20% of TAP to other purposes, Ben thought is money is intended for local governments
 - Only allow transfers if there aren't qualified local projects
- \$2.4B Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
 - To reduce traffic fatalities
 - Strategic Highway Safety Plan (at least every five years)
 - HSIP must be in alignment with Strategic Highway Safety Improvement Program

Mae Stevens

- Former Hill Staffer to Senator Cardin (Transportation focus and environment as well)
 - All of EPA, energy, Transportation, Dept. of Interior (public lands and endangered species, agriculture, and ocean (her portfolio), Now a lobbyist
- Key helpful insights to Hill staffers
 - Hill staffers are extremely important and are young in their mid-20s
 - Know a lot of these issues —> maybe not policy
- Take meetings in 30 minute increments
- Days are usually 7am to 10pm
 - Extremely proud to serve their country and community
- Difference between Senate and House staffs and committee staffs
 - House staff members have more to cover vs. Senate staffers
- Know what committees they are on
- House members are up for re-election in November
- Senate only a 1/3 is up for re-election in November
- What is a congressional meeting like?
 - Order on how to talk about these items
 - What is the problem?
 - What is the solution?
 - What are specifically asking?
 - What is your ask?
 - Surface Transportation Block Grant to funding levels at 62.5% levels
 - Talk about local levels issues
 - It's okay to have a short meeting (don't run over on time)
 - Pause for questions
 - Get information from them on where their boss stands on issues
 - Don't argue with them
 - Write it down / intel is very important
 - What happens if a staffer asks a question?
 - I don't know and I'll get back to you.
 - Most staff are very nice!
 - If you're late, call their DC office and let them know in advance — packets will have their phone numbers as well
 - Practice, practice, practice!

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Monday, March 9, 2020

Afternoon General Session

3:30PM to 5PM

Panel discussion

Youth representative Barry Dechtman

- Programs in cities for vocational and other industries
- Pragmatic programs are important such as knowing how to file taxes, etc.
- Reach out to the youth and uplift the youth voices
- Voted in his first election
- There are multiple pathways for a career and college for all is not for all

Congresswoman Kathy Castor, Democrat from Florida (From Tampa, FL)

- Local leadership is critical
- Congress' time to develop a clean energy future
- Partnership is critical with local leaders
- Flooding, extreme heat, clean water resources, etc. are critical elements
- How will Congress partner with you on Climate
 - Congress needs to listen
 - Congresswoman Castor is Chair of Climate Change
 - Not allow slash budgets for EPA and taking away billions from energy efficient portions

Video on the Census

- Done every 10 years
- It's important
- Will be receiving something in the mail
- Accurate data is key

NLC CEO President Clarence Anthony

- Census data determines funding for programs for city programs
- Federal support is key (low income housing, SNAP programs, rural programs, and community development block grants)
- Children under five been undercounted historically, for various reasons
- Census will be digital
- Census Rapid Response Grant Program
 - Mesa, Arizona was one municipal that is a recipient from this grant

Mayor James Diosa of Central Falls Rhode Island

- Spoke about Census
- \$28K median household income
- 200K people in one square mile
- Hard to count community
- In 2018 census test — population hard to count
- Most people don't trust the federal government
- People trust their local officials and school officials as well as local non-profits
- People are still confused that Census is only online
- Census will not contain a question about Citizenship

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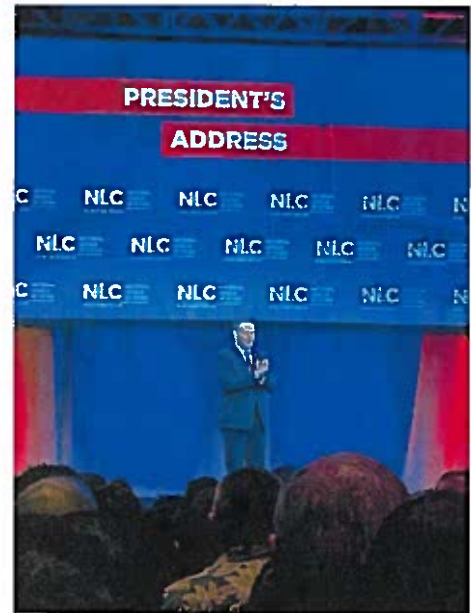
President Joe Buscaino

- Encouraged attendees to visit Census Bureau website
- Advocate on Capitol Hill on investment infrastructure

Conversation About Transportation Infrastructure

Chair Dan Fowler and Congressman Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Democrat from Illinois

- Former local elected official and state senator and member on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and a freshman member on the committee
- Has a Masters Degree in Urban Planning; immigrated from Mexico when he was nine years old
- Framework will provide a level of certainty
- All federal tools need to pay upfront
- Local control is also important
- Package \$760B
 - \$329B for Highway Safety
 - \$55B for rail
 - \$30B for airports
 - \$34B for clean energy
 - \$86B for broadband and communications —> for rural America
 - And other funding sources
 - More input from small to medium cities
 - Chair Peter DeFazio from Oregon
- Spend millions of dollars on roadways yet fail to maintain roads
- More road miles = more induced congestion
- Transportation Access and affordability are key in our local communities
 - Transportation is a social justice issue and aggressive use it as a tool
- Transportation Infrastructure Committee is the largest committee in Congress
 - Folks on the committee are having conversations about funding and ensuring that we increase the fuel tax (27 states have done it already)
 - Need to do other things as well:
 - Growing bi-partisanship support to address the Highway Trust Fund
 - How do we prioritize our transportation dollars



President Joe Buscaino

Small Business Administrator (former UPS executive), Jovita Carranza originally from Chicago

- Support small business developments, women, minorities, and Americans with disabilities
- Small business ownership is a powerful vehicle
- Latino owned business grew by nearly 35% in her home community
- Entrepreneurship is creating wealth in the community
- Retired as the highest ranking Latina in the UPS organizations
 - Average support from personal savings for a Latino owned business
- Promoting micro-loan program (minority, veterans, and women)

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- SBA will have guaranteed \$100B in loans since President Trump entered the White House
- Met Penny an owner of a small business in Las Vegas. Penny's restaurant is an opportunity zone and is a recipient of the small business loan.
- President Trump cleared the way for funding for economic injury as result of Coronavirus

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

General Session

9AM to 10:15AM

Panel Discussion

Fremont Mayor Lily Mei

- Homelessness issues
- Did a point-in-time count in Fremont
- Community Session 1500 people attended
- Over 459 speakers
- Housing Navigation System
 - Hygiene facilities
 - Referral to support services
- Need to address homelessness
- Free rotating breakfast services with faith-based organizations
- Most people have been homeless in Fremont for a long period of time
- Inclusionary housing
- Building senior housing

City Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, San Antonio, TX

- Top priorities to end homelessness
 - Funding and coordination

Other panelists

- Ensuring that our first responders are equipped and protected with the current outbreak of the Coronavirus
- Funding diversion programs —> divert low offenders —> sent to department of health

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (Irma Esparza Diggs from NLC asked questions during this short interview)

- How will you ensure that our nation's infrastructure and broadband will have access
- There is a bill that Congress is working on
- Shared about her experience on the City Council
- Explained about \$4B a month for Afghanistan
- \$3B per year for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- What about workforce? By a 50 point margin most people would support skill based work. What will you do to ensure that we meet our job needs today?
 - Many youth experience student loan debt
- Housing
 - "Current administration eliminates for CDBG funding" -From NLC Irma
 - Hawaii has the highest number of homelessness per capita
 - Homelessness is a national crisis
 - Build partnerships
 - HUD Vash Vouchers, funding for veterans, changes in zoning laws

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Mayor of West Hollywood Lindsey Horvath and Dr. E. Oscar Alleyne, Senior Advisor for Public Health Programs, National Association of County and City Health Officials

- COVID-19 Corona Virus
- It's important to have a plan
- Difference from Coronavirus vs. the Flu
 - Coronavirus no treatment for it, unlike the flu, which has treatment
 - It's a new virus
- How long does it live on counter tops and surfaces?
 - Contact precautions
 - Stay within six feet of an individual
 - Ensure you must wash your hands (soap and water)
 - Use hand sanitizers when you don't have access to soap and water
- How do you approach mass events?
 - Do you have illness in your population?
 - Mass events from 1,000 to 25,000
 - Where do you see the disease? Where do you see the impact?
 - Make a sound judgment because we'll be in this for the long haul
- Make statements that people aware — our public health officials are working hard
- Quarantine rules is under the jurisdiction of the local health authority
- For the next three to six months —> Would probably see an increase in the spread
 - Ensure that plans are in place
- There are several human Coronavirus
 - Lysol has labeled "kill Coronavirus"
 - COVID-19 is a new virus and wouldn't apply to the other forms of viruses

NLC President Joe Buscaino

- Mayor Michael Bloomberg
 - Supported the National League of Cities leading cities agenda
 - Important to fill the gap urgently
 - Will expand work with local leaders —> also has a foundation
 - Decreasing the spread of the disease
 - Helping those who need to recover
 - Rebuilding economies
 - COVID-19 is both an economic crisis and health crisis
 - Was elected mayor seven weeks after elected mayor of New York after 9/11
 - Built teams and gave resources
 - Collected data
 - Worked with hospitals and first responders
 - Improved communications across all languages
 - Public health is always been a passion
 - Became an ambassador for the World Health Organization after his term as mayor
 - Goal one —> protecting people from the Coronavirus

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Tuesday, March 10, 2020

10:45AM to 12:15PM

Homelessness and the Justice System: Challenges and Initiatives

Five people on the panel

- No city should have any panhandling laws
- Representative from the National Center of Law and Policy, Eric Tars
 - Communities that have successfully ended homelessness have not used tools to criminalize homelessness
 - We are not solving homelessness by criminalizing it
 - Big win is getting homelessness encampments off the streets
 - Example: A constituent contacts you and explains that a homeless encampment is on their street. What do you do as an elected official?
 - Sweep them off the street?
 - Enact a law to ban them from camping?
 - Or use a housing first approach and best practices to get them services.
 - Working with a vacant lot or a vacant commercial properties
 - Sponsoring a dumpster or hygiene facility
 - CEO from Salesforce raised \$300M to improve homelessness
 - Housing first costs two to three times less

Kelly Miller, homeless advocate and had been a homeless person in DC

- What is it like to be homeless?
- Started being homeless in 2011
- From Kentucky
- Started being homeless and lived in her vehicle for over two years in the mountains
- Studied law and went to school — went to school online
 - Filed a lawsuit and won in criminal court
 - Went to the Nation's Capital to meet with her members of Congress
 - Lived in a shelter near Georgetown
 - Not safe to be in a shelter
 - Not having money and being poor doesn't limit me
 - We are all equal
 - Had bogus notices to have security alerts about her
 - She slept on the street and will sleep on the street tonight
 - Has a Post Office Box — right to commerce
 - Filed a lawsuit because she felt her rights were violated
 - Homelessness is 24/7
 - Homelessness has to do with lack of housing, don't have a family structure we used to have, don't have the tools to survive, teach people how to navigate through society
- Use your voice
- We all are human and we all need to treat each other kindness

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Councilmember Ed Stern, City of Poulsbo

- A town in Washington
- Gaps in public behavioral health treatment system disproportionately affect local governments
- Not a big fan of Martin v. Boise
- Majority of shelters were in churches in their gyms
- City of Poulsbo Navigator Program
- Every detective in a police force there should be a navigator
- Navigation is not a therapy or case management

NLC has issues, briefs and case studies of what's been happening across the country
Follow your data and use it as a resource.

Public wants to see an immediate response on the streets to clean up the area.

- Don't let people run their camps; better to have camps with city in the lead
- Dozens of vacant properties —> better to make better use of vacant properties
- Every morning there is someone who lives in a vehicle or on the streets and doesn't have the needs to shower. It takes time.

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

NLC Lunch Session

12:30PM to 2:15PM

Congressman Garrett Graves

Resiliency. How long can we sustain it and how long will it last?

- More millions of dollars on the front end
- Reducing green house gas
- Biggest reason we reduced cleaner environments
 - Cleaner natural gases



Speaker Nancy Pelosi

- Her father was the former Mayor of Baltimore, MD
- \$8.3B in emergency fund —> bi-partisanship package for COVID-19

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- Families first
- Infrastructure is a critical issue
- Democrats proposing \$760 Billion dollars for five years and are moving forward on a infrastructure bill and boldly addressing the climate crisis
 - Would generate 10 million jobs
- As city leaders we are the drumbeat of America

Dr. Mitchell Wolfe, MD, Center for Disease Control

www.coronavirus.gov

- Hope to have a vaccine in one to one and half years from now
- Coronavirus 101
 - www.cdc.gov/Covid19
 - First isolated and discovered in the 1960s
 - Seven types
 - Thinks it all started in a live animal market
 - 01/21/2020 —> first case in the U.S.
 - Check website regularly
 - Occurs from person-to-person contact
 - Or from a surface with the virus
 - 30,000 people died last year from the flu
 - Prevention and treatment
 - No specific antivirals
 - Two studies ongoing now as of March 9, 2020
 - As of March 9, 2020
 - 105,586 confirmed cases; 3,584 deaths
 - There is a decrease in China; increase outside of China
 - Italy has more cases than South Korea
 - In the U.S. 559 cases; 32 deaths (19 in Washington State, One in California, and two in Florida)
 - U.S. Public Health Capacity to test 75,000
 - 30 guidance documents
 - CDC info: 1-800-CDC-INFO

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Tuesday, March 10, 2020

2:30PM to 3:30PM

NLC Capitol Hill Advocacy Day Briefing

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

NLC Advocacy Day Meetings from 7:30AM to 6:30PM

My meetings with our Hawaii Congressional Delegation were held from 1PM to 4:00PM

In addition I also met with senior staff members from the Senate Banking Committee to discuss transportation and infrastructure policies and a potential bill in the U.S. Senate.



Pictured with NLC Staffer Brittney Kohler and TIC Chair Dan Fowler

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: March 16, 2020

Traveler: Brandon Elefante

Event: NLC Congressional City Conference

Location: Washington, D.C.

Dates: From March 8, 2020

To March 12, 2020

Description	Amount	Notes
1. Registration Fee	00.00	Net \$655; paid by Protocol
2. Airfare	00.00	Net \$991.81; paid by Protocol
3. Hotel	1378.40 1381.40	Wardmark PK Marriott (pd via CM personal credit card
4. Meals	52.75 51.15	see attached receipts
5. Ground Transportation	47.92	Uber
6. Tips		
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	1479.07 1480.47	

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:


Signature of Traveler

3/18/2020
Date